



Arkansas Department of Education

Johnny Key, Commissioner

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

November 29, 2018

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Educator Preparation Program Enrollment Increases for First Time in More than 5 Years

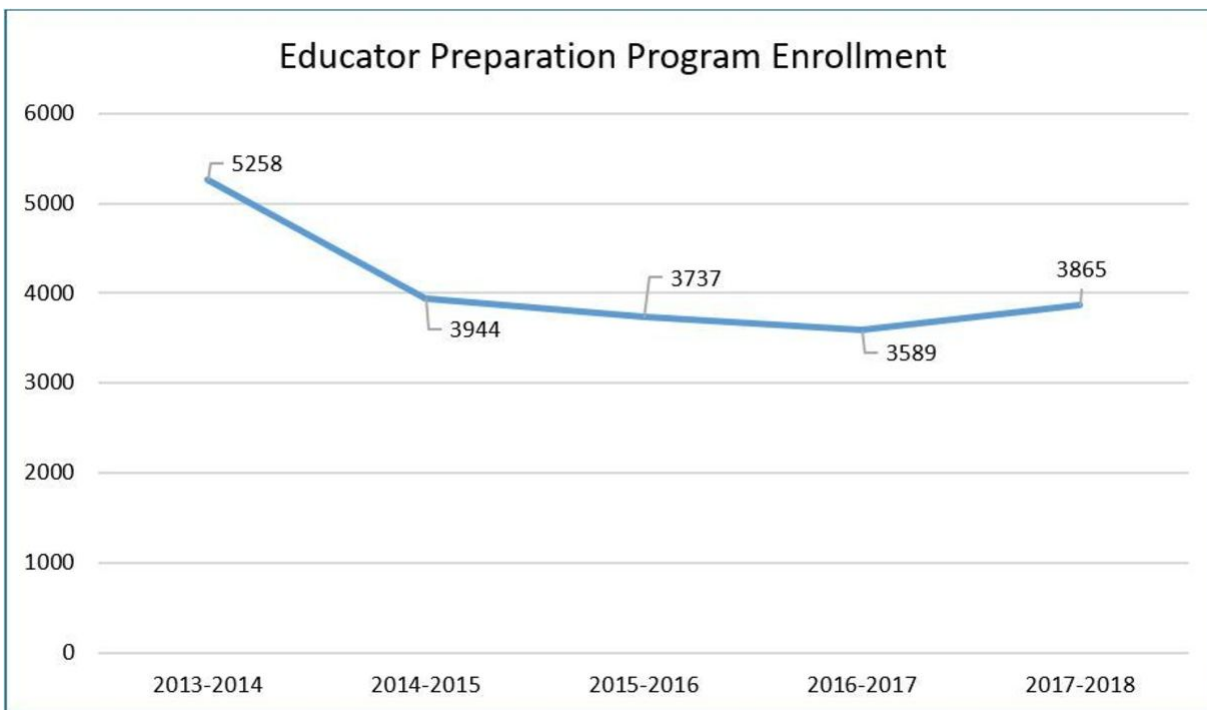
LITTLE ROCK — Statewide efforts to promote the teaching profession and increase the teacher pipeline are proving successful, as enrollment in educator preparation programs has increased for the first time in more than five years.

"It is encouraging to see that our efforts to recruit students into the education field are proving successful," □ Gov. Asa Hutchinson said. "This increase is a good sign, but it will be important for us to continue monitoring these numbers over the next few years. I am confident that we will continue to see positive outcomes as a result of our statewide efforts to compete for the most talented educators in the region."

"In order to transform Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education, we must have a strong teacher pipeline," Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Johnny Key said.

"Through our efforts to strengthen partnerships with educator preparation program providers, along with the launch of our Teach Arkansas campaign earlier this year, we are seeing success. While we still have work to do, ADE stands committed to collaborating with partners to promote the teaching profession, encourage enrollment in teacher preparation programs and assist districts with teacher recruitment efforts. Because of these efforts, along with Governor Hutchinson's commitment to increasing starting teacher salaries, we will continue to see increases in enrollment numbers and overall student success."

According to the U.S. Department of Education Title II data, enrollment in Arkansas educator preparation programs not only increased for the first time in more than five years, enrollment numbers for 2017-2018 were higher than two years prior. Last year's enrollment reflects an increase of 128 students compared to 2015-2016 and a reversal from the downward trend seen in previous years.



Efforts to Increase the Pipeline

The overall enrollment increase can be attributed to several efforts since 2015 to reverse the enrollment decline. In February 2017, the ADE launched the Teach Arkansas campaign to encourage more Arkansans to consider joining the teaching profession. The campaign focuses on three areas: teacher recruitment, support for existing teachers and encouraging educators to return to the profession. Through the campaign, ADE has focused on elevating the teaching profession through efforts to revamp licensure requirements, host lecture series for educators and provide support for candidates who are struggling to pass Praxis® exams.

Beginning in January 2019, educators will be eligible to renew licenses under the new licensure career continuum, which will differentiate between early, career, lead and master educators. The new continuum will provide advancement opportunities for educators to lead from the classroom without leaving the classroom.

Additional promising enrollment trends exist for special education preparation. The expansion of special education preparation programs to include alternative preparation and first-time licensure options for aspiring special education teachers are proving successful with increased enrollment. According to a survey of Arkansas universities that have approved special education programs, the number of Arkansas students enrolled in special education programs at institutions of higher education increased to an all-time high of 976 for the fall of 2018. This is an increase of 13 percent from 2017 and a 55 percent increase from 2015.

The expansion of the Arkansas Teacher Cadets program at high schools around the state also has shown promise for future educator preparation enrollment. During the 2013-2014 pilot year, five schools participated in the "grow your own" teacher recruitment program. Since then, the program has increased exponentially to include 74 schools, 22 colleges and universities, and 800 students this school year.

Without partnerships, however, efforts to improve the teacher pipeline would be in vain. ADE has strengthened its partnership with education service cooperatives, institutes of higher education and

alternative education preparation providers. By partnering together at Become an Arkansas Teacher events and job fairs around the state, candidates have had the opportunity to learn more about the profession and network with ADE team members and representatives from educator preparation programs.

Education service cooperatives also have hired recruitment and retention facilitators to support novice teachers and provide resources for teachers entering the teaching profession. This support is provided for the first three years of employment to assist novice teachers with developing their teaching skills. In many cases, master teachers provide support regarding educational strategies and facilitate networking opportunities for novice teachers.

To learn more about how to become an Arkansas teacher, please visit the ADE website at <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/educator%20effectiveness>.

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